

# NIGHTMARE OF NEHRUISM

---

SITA RAM GOEL

Postscript To  
“How I Became A Hindu”

# **HOW I BECAME A HINDU**

**SITA RAM GOEL**

**VOICE OF INDIA**  
New Delhi

**© AUTHOR**  
**First published 1982**  
**Second Reprint, 1987**  
**Third Enlarged Edition, 1993**  
**Third Reprint, 1998**

**All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.**

**ISBN 81-85990-05-0**

**Published by Voice of India, 2/18, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110 002 and  
printed at Rajkamal Electric Press, B-35/9, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi-110 033.**

# CONTENTS

<b>ONE</b>		
	<b>From Arya Samaj to Mahatma Gandhi</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TWO</b>		
	<b>From Gandhism to Communism</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THREE</b>		
	<b>Seeds that were to Sprout</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FOUR</b>		
	<b>Some Interesting Encounters</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>FIVE</b>		
	<b>Close to the Communist Party</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>SIX</b>		
	<b>Ram Swarup to the Rescue</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>SEVEN</b>		
	<b>Back to Square One</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>EIGHT</b>		
	<b>Return to my Spiritual Home</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>POSTSCRIPT</b>		
	<b>Nightmare of Nehruism</b>	<b>56</b>

## POSTSCRIPT

### NIGHTMARE OF NEHRUIISM

I am adding this postscript to the third reprint of what may be described as my intellectual autobiography in order to complete my story as a convinced and conscious Hindu. The story relates mainly to my encounter with Nehruism in its various expressions.

Today, I view Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as a bloated Brown Sahib, and Nehruism as the combined embodiment of all the imperialist ideologies — Islam, Christianity, White Man's Burden, and Communism — that have flooded this country in the wake of foreign invasions. And I do not have the least doubt in my mind that if India is to live, Nehruism must die. Of course, it is already dying under the weight of its sins against the Indian people, their country, their society, their economy, their environment, and their culture. What I plead is that a conscious rejection of Nehruism in all its forms will hasten its demise, and save us from the mischief which it is bound to create further if it is allowed to linger.

I have reached this conclusion after a study of Pandit Nehru's writings, speeches and policies ever since he started looming large on the Indian political scene. But lest my judgement sounds arbitrary, I am making clear the premises from which I proceed. These premises themselves have been worked out by me through prolonged reflection on the society and culture to which I belong.

I have already described how I returned to an abiding faith in Sanātana Dharma under the guidance of Ram Swarup. The next proposition which became increasingly clear to me in discussions with him, was that Hindu society which has been the vehicle of Sanātana Dharma is a great society and deserves all honour and devotion from its sons and daughters. Finally, Bhāratavarsha became a holy land for me because it has been and remains the homeland of Hindu society.

There are Hindus who start the other way round, that is, with Bhāratavarsha being a holy land (*pūṇyabhūmi*) simply because it happens to be their fatherland (*pitribhūmi*) as well as the field of their activity (*karmabhūmi*). They honour Hindu society because their forefathers belonged to it, and fought the foreign invaders as Hindus. Small wonder that their notion of nationalism is purely territorial, and their notion of Hindu society no more than tribal. For me, however, the starting point is Sanātana Dharma. Without Sanātana Dharma,

**Bhāratavarsha** for me is just another piece of land, and Hindu society just another assembly of human beings. So my commitment is to **Sanātāna Dharma**, Hindu society, and **Bhāratavarsha** — in that order.

In this perspective, my first premise is that **Sanātana Dharma** which is known as Hinduism at present, is not only a religion but also a whole civilization which has flourished in this country for ages untold, and which is struggling to come into its own again after a prolonged encounter with several sorts of predatory imperialism. On the other hand, I do not regard Islam and Christianity as religions at all. They are, for me, ideologies of imperialism like Nazism and Communism, legitimizing aggression by one set of people against another in the name of a god which gangsters masquerading as prophets have invented after their own image. I see no place for them in India, now that India has defeated and dispersed Islamic and Christian regimes. I do not concede to Islam and Christianity the right to maintain their missions in this country, or, for that matter, their seminaries which train missionaries for waging war on the Hindus. I have no use for a Secularism which treats Hinduism as just another religion, and puts it on par with Islam and Christianity. For me, this concept of Secularism is a gross perversion of the concept which arose in the modern West as a revolt against Christianity and which should mean, in the Indian context, a revolt against Islam as well. The other concept of Secularism, namely, *sarva-dharma-samabhāva* was formulated by Mahatma Gandhi in order to cure Islam and Christianity of their aggressive self-righteousness, and stop them from effecting conversions from the Hindu fold. This second concept was abandoned when the Constitution of India conceded to Islam and Christianity the right to convert as a fundamental right. Those who invoke this concept in order to browbeat the Hindus are either ignorant of the Mahatma's intention, or are deliberately distorting his message.

My second premise is that Hindus in their ancestral homeland are not a mere community. For me, the Hindus constitute the nation, and are the only people who are interested in the unity, integrity, peace and prosperity of this country. On the other hand, I do not regard the Muslims and the Christians as separate communities. For me, they are our own people who have been alienated by Islamic and Christian imperialism from their ancestral society and culture, and who are being used by imperialist forces abroad as their colonies for creating mischief and strife in the Hindu homeland. I, therefore, do not subscribe to the thesis that Indian nationalism is something apart from and above Hindu

nationalism. For me, Hindu nationalism is the same as Indian nationalism. I have no use for the slogans of "composite culture", "composite nationalism" and "composite state". And I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that all those who mouth these slogans as well as the slogan of "Hindu communalism", are, wittingly or unwittingly, being traitors to the cause of Indian nationalism, no matter what ideological attires they put on and what positions they occupy in the present set-up.

My third premise is that Bhāratavarsha has been and remains the Hindu homeland par excellence. I repudiate the description of Bhāratavarsha as the Indian or Indo-Pak Subcontinent. I refuse to concede that Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have ceased to be integral parts of the Hindu homeland simply because they have passed under the heel of Islamic imperialism. Hindus have never laid claim to any land outside the natural and well-defined borders of their ancient homeland, either by right of conquest or by invoking a promise made in some scripture. I, therefore, see no reason why Hindus should surrender their claim to what they have legitimately inherited from their forefathers but what has been taken away from them by means of armed force. Moreover, unless the Hindus liberate those parts of their homeland from the stranglehold of Islam, they will continue to face the threat of aggression against the part that remains in their possession at present. These so-called Islamic countries have been used in the past, and are being used at present as launching pads for the conquest of India that has survived.

My fourth premise is that the history of Bhāratavarsha is the history of Hindu society and culture. It is the history of how the Hindus created a civilization which remained the dominant civilization of the world for several millennia, how they became complacent due to excess of power and prosperity and neglected the defences of their homeland, how they threw back or absorbed in the vast complex of their society and culture a series of early invaders, and how they fought the onslaughts of Islamic, Christian, and British imperialism for several centuries and survived. I do not recognize the Muslim rule in medieval India as an indigenous dispensation. For me, it was as much of a foreign rule as the latter-day British rule. The history of foreign invaders forms no part of the history of India, and remains a part of the history of those countries from which the invaders came, or of those cults to which they subscribed. And I do not accept the theory of an Aryan invasion of India in the second millennium BC. This theory was originally proposed by scholars as a tentative hypothesis for explaining the fact that the lan-

guages spoken by the Indians, the Iranians, and the Europeans belong to the same family. And a tentative hypothesis it has remained till today so far as the world of scholarship is concerned. It is only the anti-national and separatist forces in India which are presenting this hypothesis as a proved fact in order to browbeat the Hindus, and fortify their divisive designs. I have studied the subject in some depth, and find that the linguistic fact can be explained far more satisfactorily if the direction of Aryan migration is reversed.

These are my principal premises for passing judgement on Pandit Nehru and Nehruism. Many minor premises can be deduced from them for a detailed evaluation of India's spiritual traditions, society, culture, history, and contemporary politics.

It may be remembered that Pandit Nehru was by no means a unique character. Nor is Nehruism a unique phenomenon for that matter. Such weak-minded persons and such subservient thought-processes have been seen in all societies that have suffered the misfortune of being conquered and subjected to alien rule for some time. There are always people in all societies who confuse superiority of armed might with superiority of culture, who start despising themselves as belonging to an inferior breed and end by taking to the ways of the conqueror in order to regain self-confidence, who begin finding faults with everything they have inherited from their forefathers, and who finally join hands with every force and factor which is out to subvert their ancestral society. Viewed in this perspective, Pandit Nehru was no more than a self-alienated Hindu, and Nehruism is not much more than Hindu-baiting born out of and sustained by a deep-seated sense of inferiority vis-a-vis Islam, Christianity, and the modern West.

Muslim rule in medieval India had produced a whole class of such self-alienated Hindus. They had interpreted the superiority of Muslim arms as symbolic of the superiority of Muslim culture. Over a period of time, they had come to think and behave like the conquerors and to look down upon their own people. They were most happy when employed in some Muslim establishment so that they might pass as members of the ruling elite. The only thing that could be said in their favour was that, for one reason or the other, they did not convert to Islam and merge themselves completely in Muslim society. But for the same reason, they had become trojan horses of Islamic imperialism, and worked for pulling down the cultural defences of their own people.

The same class walked over to the British side when British arms became triumphant. They retained most of those anti-Hindu prejudices

which they had borrowed from their Muslim masters, and cultivated some more which were contributed by the British establishment and the Christian missions. That is how the British rule became a divine dispensation for them. The most typical product of this double process was Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

Fortunately for Hindu society, however, the self-alienated Hindu had not become a dominant factor during the Muslim rule. His class was confined to the urban centres where alone Muslim influence was present in a significant measure. The number of this bastard breed was few and far between in the countryside where Muslim rule had never struck strong roots. Secondly, the capacity of Islam for manipulating human minds by means of ideological warfare was less than poor. It worked mostly by means of brute force, and aroused strong resistance. Finally, throughout the period of Muslim rule, the education of Hindu children had remained in Hindu hands by and large. So the self-alienated Hindu existed and functioned only on the margins of Hindu society, and seldom in the mainstream.

All this changed with the coming of the British conquerors and the Christian missionaries. Their influence was not confined to the urban centres because their outposts had spread to the countryside as well. Secondly, they were equipped with a stock of ideas and the means for communicating them which were far more competent as compared to the corresponding equipment of Islam. And what made the big difference in the long run was that the education of Hindu children was taken over by the imperialist and the missionary establishments. As a cumulative result, the crop of self-alienated Hindus multiplied fast and several fold. Add to that the blitzkrieg against authentic Hindus and in favour of the self-alienated Hindus mounted by the Communist apparatus built up by Soviet imperialism. It is no less than a wonder in human history that Hindu society and culture not only survived the storm, but also produced a counter-attack under Maharshi Dayananda, Swami Vivekanand, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi such as earned for them the esteem of the world at large. Even so, the self-alienated Hindus continued to multiply and flourish in a cultural milieu mostly dominated by the modern West. And they came to the top in the post-independence period when no stalwart of the Hindu resurgence remained on the scene.

The power and prestige which Pandit Nehru acquired within a few years after the death of Sardar Patel had nothing to do with his own merits, either as a person, or as a political leader, or as a thinker. They were the outcome of a long historical process which had brought to the

fore a whole class of self-alienated Hindus. Pandit Nehru would have never come to the top if this class had not been there. And this class would not have become dominant or remained so, had it not been sustained by establishments in the West, particularly that in the Soviet Union.

It is not an accident that the Nehruvian regime has behaved like the British Raj in most respects. The Nehruvians have looked at India not as a Hindu country but as a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural cockpit. They have tried their best, like the British, to suppress the mainstream society and culture with the help of "minorities", that is, the colonies crystallized by imperialism. They have also tried to fragment Hindu society, and create more "minorities" in the process. In fact, it has been their whole-time occupation to eliminate every expression of Hindu culture, to subvert every symbol of Hindu pride, and persecute every Hindu organization, in the name of protecting the "minorities". Hindus have been presented as monsters who will commit cultural genocide if allowed to come to power.

The partition of the country was brought about by Islamic imperialism. But the Nehruvians blamed it shamelessly on what they stigmatized as Hindu communalism. A war on the newly born republic of India was waged by the Communists in the interests of Soviet imperialism. But the Nehruvians were busy apologizing for these traitors, and running hammer and tongs after the RSS. There are many more parallels between the British Raj on the one hand and the Nehruvian regime on the other. I am not going into details because I am sure that the parallels will become obvious to anyone who applies his mind to the subject. The Nehruvian formula is that Hindus should stand accused in every situation, no matter who is the real culprit.

## II

It was my great good fortune that Pandit Nehru never became my hero. Heroes have a way of inhibiting cold reasoning and calm reflection among those who admire them. My reason and reflection have suffered an eclipse, every now and then. But not for long. And not for a moment under the spell of Pandit Nehru.

During my school days in my village and, later on, in Delhi, the Freedom Movement for me meant Mahatma Gandhi. I did not hear many stories about him except that he lived on goat's milk, plied the *charkhā*, and had tamed the wild Pathans. The only other leader of whom I became increasingly aware was Pandit Nehru. There was quite

a folklore afloat about him. He was reputed to be the only son of a fabulously rich man who lived in a palace at Allahabad, who got his clothes stitched in London and laundered in Paris, who had used high-denomination currency notes as fuel for preparing tea when the viceroy paid him a visit, and who had blisters all over his tender skin when he put on *khādi* clothes for the first time. The son was known to have received his school and college education in England, spurned the friendship of the Prince of Wales who was his classmate, turned down with contempt many honours which the British were only too keen to bestow upon him in order to win him over to their side, and chosen to be the *betāj bādshāh* (uncrowned king) of his own people.

I, therefore, felt excited when wall-posters went up all over Delhi, announcing that the great man was going to address a public meeting in the Gandhi Grounds adjacent to the Chandni Chowk. I do not remember the exact date. It was most probably in late 1934 or early 1935. I was a student of the seventh standard.

Gandhi Grounds was at a stone's throw from the place where I lived. Even so, I went to the venue of the meeting quite early in order to sit near the rostrum, and see the speaker from close quarters. The rostrum was quite high. But the crowd that collected by the time Pandit Nehru arrived was not big by latter-day standards.

There was a thunderous applause as Pandit Nehru came up on the rostrum, greeted the people with folded hands, and was formally introduced by a local Congress leader. But the next thing I saw made me rub my eyes. The great man had become red in the face, turned to his left, and planted a slap smack on the face of the same leader who was standing near the mike. The mike had failed. Pandit Nehru was gesticulating and shouting at the top of his voice as if something terrible had happened. Meanwhile the mike had started functioning again so that he could be heard all over the place. He was saying: "*Dilli ki Congress kē kārkun kaminē haiñ, razil haiñ, namāqūl haiñ. Mainē kyatti bār insē kahā hai ke intizām nahīn kar saktē tō mujhē mat bulāyā karō, par yē suntē hī nahīn* (the leaders of the Congress in Delhi are lowbred, mean, and mindless people. I have told them time and again not to invite me if they cannot make proper arrangements. But they pay no heed)." There was pin-drop silence for a moment. The next moment there was another thunderous applause. The Gandhi-capped man sitting next to me offered comment: "Panditji is famous for his temper. And people like him all the more that way." I turned towards the rostrum. The face of the Congress leader who had been slapped was bathed in smiles as if he had won some coveted prize.

This was a new experience for me. I had attended many public meetings in my village, at my district headquarters, and in Delhi. I had never witnessed such wild behaviour on a public platform. Of course, those other speakers were not so big as this one. Was it the way the big ones behaved? I wondered. I found it difficult to admire a man who had not only shouted at but also slapped someone who was placed lower than him in life, and who was in no position to hit back. And that too for no fault of the victim. Even as a young boy, I had nothing but contempt for bullies.

The speech which followed was far more disappointing. I do not remember the subject. It must have been about the current political scene. I understood no politics at that time beyond the call that the British must go. All I can recall now is the language which Pandit Nehru was speaking. It was neither Hindi, nor Urdu. Most of his sentences were far from being straight in terms of grammar or syntax. Occasionally, he was fumbling for words. I thought he was a very poor speaker. I had heard many others who, though not so well-known, were far better and more coherent. I would not have noticed his language if I had not known that he belonged to a province which was famous for both Hindi and Urdu in proper form.

There were several other public meetings in Delhi addressed by Pandit Nehru after this first one which I had attended. But I did not care for them. His next performance I saw was in 1942. Talks with the Cripps Mission had failed a few days earlier. I wanted to know what the Congress intended to do next vis-a-vis the war which Hitler was waging against the Soviet Union. I was a post-graduate student by now, full of sympathy for the cause which my professor of political science had presented as that of human freedom and progress. I was convinced that Hitler was a wild beast who had to be hunted down at any cost.

The venue of the meeting was the same old Gandhi Grounds. But the crowd was much bigger than I had ever seen in a public meeting. I took my stand near the gate which opens towards the Fountain. I did not want to be caught in the melee at the end of the meeting. Little did I know that I was going to witness a scene which would turn me away from Pandit Nehru for all time to come.

The great man was profusely garlanded as soon as he appeared on the rostrum. He repeated his greetings to the people with folded hands. But as he moved towards the mike, there was some commotion at one corner of the gathering. Someone told me that workers in one of the cotton mills in Delhi had gone on strike, and were seeking Pandit

Nehru's support for their demands. I thought the workers were being unseemly. They had chosen a wrong time and a wrong place for presenting their case. The nation was in the midst of a crisis. This was no occasion to pester a national leader with petty local problems. I also gathered that the Communists were at the back of the commotion. To hell with the Communists, I said.

But as I turned towards the rostrum again, what I saw was far more unseemly. Pandit Nehru was trying to get free of the grip in which he was being held by several Congress leaders who had thrown their hands round his arms and waist. He was being prevented from jumping down, and running towards the far corner in which the commotion had arisen. He seemed to be unaware of the crowd sitting in-between. One moment he was moving forward, and the next moment he was being pulled back. And all the time, he was shouting at the top of his voice. The mike reported him as saying, "*Dekhnā chāhtā hūn in kamīnōn kō main. Batā dēnā chāhtā hūn inkō ke main kōn hūn. Inki ye gandī harkatein main qatai bardāshī nahīn kar saktā* (I want to have a look at these lowbred people. I want to tell them who I am. I cannot tolerate this dirty behaviour on their part)." The commotion died down. The Congress leaders relaxed their hold on him. Suddenly, he straightened up as if he was going to get out of his boots. He stretched his right hand, full and upwards, and shouted, "*Main ēk shāndār ādmī hūn* (I am a man of some stature)." The crowd was clapping wildly, and continuously.

His speech that day was totally incoherent. It seemed as if he was talking to himself rather than addressing a rally. He kept on withdrawing in the next sentence what he had said in an earlier one. One moment he was denouncing the British as "a stone sitting on our breast". Next moment he was bubbling with sympathy for the cause of freedom and progress being defended by the Soviet Union. He was all for a fight to the finish so far as British imperialism was concerned. But at the same time he warned the people against coming in the way of the war effort. It was difficult to make out as to where he stood. I will not comment on the language he was speaking. I found it as shabby as on the earlier occasion.

Much worse came after the meeting dispersed. He descended from the rostrum and started moving towards the gate where I was standing. Congress volunteers had formed a cordon round him. But as the people rushed forward and tried to touch his feet, he pushed away the volunteers and started looking after himself. He was slapping with both his hands and kicking with both his feet the people who came near him. He

was wearing full boots. Some of his fans must have been badly hurt. I thought he had no business to treat his people in this cruel manner. After all, they were only trying to show their devotion to him in the only way they had learnt from their tradition.

A few days earlier, I had been to the Harijan Basti in North Delhi, where Mahatma Gandhi was staying. I had sat at his feet for more than an hour, without anyone trying to drive me out of the small cottage. He had made all of us laugh heartily as he tried to coax some rich men into giving him money for the Harijan cause, in amounts larger than those they had offered initially. Evening came, and he proceeded towards the prayer meeting. Volunteers had thrown a rope cordon round him. But people could not be held back. They rushed from every side, and crawled under the cordon to reach his feet. He stopped walking, and stood looking helpless. His face was beaming with love. He said in a husky voice, "*Būdhā hūn, mar jāūngā. Jākar bēth jāūn tō pachhī sir sē pair tak chhū lenā* (I am old. I will die. Let me get there and sit down. Then you can touch me from head to foot)."

I compared the behaviour of the two great national leaders when faced with crowds of their people. I could not help concluding that while Mahatma Gandhi was a son of the soil, at home in the midst of his people, Pandit Nehru was a Brown Sahib who loved to see the people crowd his meetings but who despised their culture. He looked like an alien who had strayed into a strange land. Whatever I saw or came to know of Pandit Nehru subsequently confirmed this conclusion. I will mention only one more instance.

I happened to be in Delhi towards the end of 1947 or in early 1948, and went to see my journalist friend from America. As I have mentioned, he had left Calcutta for Delhi soon after India became free. As I sat down with him in the Coffee House, he said, "Sita, who does this man think he is? Almighty God?" I asked him, "Who? What has happened?" He told me the story of some Sadhus who had sat down on an indefinite fast near Pandit Nehru's residence in New Delhi, and were seeking an assurance from him that cow-slaughter would be stopped now that the beef-eating British had departed. My friend said, "I had gone there to take some pictures, and gather a report. American readers love such stories from India. But what I saw was a horror for me. As I was talking to one of the Sadus who knew some English, this man rushed out of his house accompanied by his sister, Mrs. Pandit. Both of them were shouting something in Hindi. The poor Sadus were taken by surprise, and stood up. This man slapped the Sadu who had moved

forward with folded hands. His sister did the same. They were saying something which sounded pretty harsh. Then both of them turned back, and disappeared as fast as they had come. The Sadus did not utter so much as a word in protest, not even after the duo had left. They had taken it all as if it was the normal thing." I observed, "But in the case of Pandit Nehru, it *is* the normal thing. He has been slapping and kicking people all his life." He concluded, "I do not know the norm in your country. In my country, if the President so much as shouts on a citizen, he will have to go. We take it from no bastard, no matter how big he happens to be." I kept quiet.

Now that I have read Pandit Nehru's writings and speeches extensively, and know of the policies he followed, I can say with full confidence that this incurable bully was an incurable coward as well. One has only to piece together his behaviour pattern in different contexts, and towards different people. One can see quite clearly that at the time that he was crawling and cringing before Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Mulsim League, he was being high and mighty with the Hindu Mahasabha and its leaders. Later on, he was thundering against the RSS, and at the same time crawling before the Communists in India and abroad who were lambasting him as a running dog of American imperialism. He could never help licking the boot that kicked him, while heaping humiliations on those who were in no position to hit back, or who did not know how to tell him his place.

### III

The story of how we started our anti-communist work in 1949 by supporting Pandit Nehru and his Government, and how we discovered in due course that the man was a committed Communist, has been told by me elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Here I want to narrate the story of how I fared as a committed Hindu in an atmosphere surcharged with Nehruism.

My philosopher friend of college days had come to Calcutta in 1955 in connection with the publication of his Ph.D thesis. He was quite a Nehru fan at that time, and believed that everything was fine with India under Nehru. I added a proviso — "so long as you do not say or write something critical on subjects where Nehru has laid down the line." He would not believe me. I asked him to write a critical article on India's model of planning or on India's foreign policy, and get it published in some prestigious paper. He accepted the challenge.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *In Defence of Comrade Krishna Menon: A Political Biography of Pandit Nehru*, New Delhi, 1963.

On his return to Delhi, he found that he had become famous among the economists there because of an article he had written on Socialism versus Capitalism. The article had been published in a learned journal in England, and hailed by some scholars of standing in that country as well as in France. A well-known professor of economics in the University of Delhi promised to create a special fellowship for him. The editor of a well-known weekly on economic affairs, published from Delhi, invited him to write a regular column. He, however, remembered my challenge. After contributing a few conventional articles to the weekly, he wrote a critique of India's planning. The editor published it all right, but told him plainly that no more articles from him were needed. And the professor dropped him like a hot potato as soon as he read his latest article. Next, he wrote a critique of India's foreign policy, and sent it to several dailies and weeklies of standing, one after another. All of them returned it with a typed chit regretting their inability to entertain it. He could confess only in an obscure weekly that he had lost the bet to me.

By the time I returned to Delhi in May 1957, Pandit Nehru was at the zenith of his power and prestige, in India and abroad. The Second Five Year Plan, patterned after the Soviet model, had been launched with great fanfare as the harbinger of a socialist era in India's history. The Americans had plumped for the Chester Bowles line that Nehru's "New India" was a great experiment in "democratic development" in contrast to the totalitarian path chosen by Red China. But these were minor compliments to the "greatest Indian after Asoka and Akbar". What he himself prized above everything else was his image as "the custodian of world peace". A sycophant press in India and a fellow-travelling one abroad, had built him up into larger than life-size. I found it difficult to believe my ears when I heard it again and again, and from people in long pants, that "but for the presence of Panditji at this critical juncture in human history, the two big powers will blow the earth to bits in an atomic holocaust". There was hardly a speech in public meetings or scholarly seminars which did not begin with the words, "as our beloved Prime Minister, the apostle of world peace, has pointed out..."

This was the heyday of delegations to and from the Communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and Red China. Not a week passed without some notables returning from this or that Communist country, and making statements about the "wonders we have witnessed with our own eyes". At the same time, the Western democracies,

particularly the United States of America, were being painted in the darkest colours. They were the "enemies of peace, progress and prosperity of the people, particularly as regards the people of Asia". If one got branded as pro-American for whatever reason, one had to hang one's head in shame. Saying something less than flattering about Communist regimes, or Communist parties, or Communism itself, was the surest way to acquiring a pro-American reputation, no matter whether one was really for America or not. Those who counted in the public life of the country were either "progressives" of the correct brand, or were trying to pass as such. They took good care to frown upon or at least avoid all contact with those who had suffered the misfortune of being branded pro-American. Small wonder that as a pronounced and well-known anti-communist I was regarded as a "questionable character" in "respectable" circles.

This was also the heyday of what was known as voluntary effort for national development. Voluntary agencies had mushroomed in every field, all over the country. Every other "public spirited" person you met in those days, was either running a voluntary agency or was in the process of promoting one. Government departments in the Centre as well as in the States were prepared to finance every variety of voluntary effort, provided one could prove its need, which was not difficult for persons who knew the art of proving or the right people in the right places. On top of it all, American funding agencies were more than eager to finance all sorts of voluntary work, provided the promoters were "respectable" people in the eyes of the establishment. I came to know of an instance where the secretary of an established voluntary organization was placed privately on the payroll of an American funding agency so that he could persuade his organization to accept American aid, which it was reluctant to do otherwise. My professor of political science whom I met one day, advised me "to float my own racket, and to live lavishly ever after". He had become cynical about voluntary effort because he had seen through the hoax.

What I noticed particularly was that although the public atmosphere was reeking with anti-Americanism, privately the Americans were pretty popular even in the most "progressive" of all "progressive" circles. Nobody had any objection to America when it came to getting American money for voluntary effort, or going on America-sponsored trips abroad, or sending sons and daughters to American universities on American grants and scholarships. I came to know of quite a few blue-blooded Communists and fellow-travellers who guzzled bottles of

American whisky and gorged fancy American foods aplenty in private American homes while in public they poured pure venom against everything American. The Americans on their part felt comfortable only in the company of such characters, and frowned upon those who had got known as pro-American. I was told by an American professor, on a short visit to India, that this was a calculated operation for turning enemies into friends. But I failed to see any friendship for America surfacing anywhere in India.

My boss in the organization I had joined as a research consultant, was an old friend. We had been to the same school and college in Delhi. We had come closer when both of us became members of the intellectual circle which had grown round Ram Swarup in 1944. He had done quite commendable work in the field of refugee rehabilitation, and was now promoting Indian handicrafts on some scale. All in all, he had become quite important in the public life of Delhi. I felt grateful to him when he offered me a job as soon as he learnt that I was on the streets due to my anti-communist activities. The only condition he laid down was that I would do no politics. I understood, though he did not say it, that the ban included political writings as well. But he had counted without the "respectable" circles in which he lived and moved. It was not long before he was called upon to defend me from all sorts of attacks, from all sorts of quarters.

The first attack he had to face was mounted by the Americans. The Rural Development Department of his organization was receiving some financial assistance from the Cooperative League of America. I had nothing to do with this Department except that the research set-up in which I worked was housed in the same premises. One day I was sitting and chatting with a colleague when the American who headed the Cooperative League dropped in. I could see it immediately that there was hostility in his eyes. The talk turned to the character of American aid as compared with that from the Soviet Union. I observed that while America was taking care of our hearths and homes, the Soviet Union was taking care of our heads. The American blew up. He said, "You must be a very bad man to say all that!" I protested that we had not even been introduced to one another, and that while he was welcome to have his own opinions he was not entitled to call me names. He walked out in a huff.

It so happened that my boss as well as my colleague had been invited for dinner to this American's home on the evening of that very day. As they entered the house, they found that the American was lying

in bed, turning sides and saying "ah, oh". His bed was surrounded by several other Americans. My boss made enquiries about his health. All Americans present raised a chorus, "That Communist you have imported from Calcutta has insulted Mr. ... this morning. He has been feeling unwell since then." My boss thought at first that I must have given free reign to my sharp tongue, for which I was famous. But my colleague corrected him and narrated the whole incident. My boss told the Americans in firm tones that my reputation was the reverse of that of a Communist, that he would suffer no dictation regarding whom he employed in his organization, and that they were welcome to fold up their aid programme and quit in the next twenty-four hours. As he started walking out of the house, the Americans were on their knees with profuse apologies for the "misunderstanding". The American in charge of the Cooperative League was no more ill. He stood up hale and hearty, and said that he could not even dream of dictating any terms. The very next morning he tried to be friendly with me. I could not refuse to shake the hand he extended towards me. I did not know what had happened at his house the previous evening. The happening was related to me months after it took place, but not by my boss.

My research work consisted mainly of compiling reports of seminars that had been held, and preparing working papers for seminars to be held. It was an era of endless seminars. There was hardly a day when one seminar or the other was not held in Delhi. Most of the time in these gatherings was taken by people who had nothing to say but who found it difficult to keep their larynx under control. They felt most profound when pontificating on mere nothing. I also discovered some faces that were present in every seminar, whatever the subject. They never spoke a word during the proceedings but were quick to collect travelling, lodging, and conveyance expenses at the end of the session. One day I collared one of them who had collected a fat sum the previous evening for coming from and going to Ahmedabad, and staying in a hotel in Delhi for two days. I wondered how he could travel so fast to and from Ahmedabad as to attend a seminar the very next day. He told me without batting an eye that he had nothing to do with Ahmedabad except that he was born there, that he lived in Delhi with his family, and that collecting fees for attending seminars was his way of making a living. I could not help admiring the wise guy. He was getting something substantial out of the seminars.

My only satisfaction in that set-up was that I got plenty of time for renewing my studies. I have already narrated how I studied the classics

on Sanātana Dharma, ancient and modern. Here I want to narrate how I straightened my view of India's history. As I became aware of the greatness of Sanātana Dharma, I fell in love with the society which had been its vehicle down the ages. But the history I had read was hardly the history of Hindu society. It was the history of conquerors who had tormented the Hindus. I became curious about how Hindu society had survived so many assaults, for such prolonged periods, particularly from the Islamic invaders and the Christian missionaries. For, I had become aware that Hindu society was the only ancient society which had survived genocidal attacks from Islam and Christianity. All other ancient societies had succumbed to these crusading creeds or their latest variation — Communism. Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Japan were the only other exceptions. But then, these exceptions too were extensions, in a large measure, of India's ancient culture.

I was now convinced that Hindu society had survived because of some innate strength which had enabled it to fight and overcome all invaders in the long run. And I started studying India's history from the vantage point of this society. It was an eye opener. The conquerors were cut to their proper size when compared to Hindu heroes who had fought them. I started a series in the *Organiser* — Highlights of Hindu History. But I could not complete it due to some trouble with my eyes. I am still aspiring to write a history of India, even if in outline.

So Hindu society deserved all honour and homage. It held the key to deeper recesses of the human spirit. But what I saw all around me was just the opposite. Far from being honoured, Hindu society was being humiliated every day. And that too in its own ancient homeland. The ruling elite had been placed in power by the sweat and toil and endless sacrifices of this society. It was this society which had broken the back of Islamic imperialism. It was this society which had defeated the Christian missions from many countries. It was this society which had freed India from British rule. Yet the Hindu elite was ashamed of being known as a part of this society. It loved to be known as Socialist, Communist, Leftist, and the rest, but never as Hindu. In fact, the very word "Hindu" had been made a dirty word in post-independence India. One had only to identify oneself as a Hindu, and one stood branded as a narrow communalist, an obscurantist, a reactionary, an enemy of national unity, and what not. There was no stigma attached to being a Muslim, or a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Jain, or a Sikh. But a Hindu who aspired to be respectable in the eyes of the ruling elite had to subscribe to Secularism, the new cult floated by Pandit Nehru and his

Communist cohorts. I wanted to know how and why the Hindus had yielded to this humiliation.

Meanwhile, my situation had improved somewhat for the better thanks to Comrade Mao Tse-tung. He had driven the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans out of their homeland, and occupied India's own territory in a series of incursions which Pandit Nehru was forced to admit in Parliament towards the end of 1959. Some friends who had avoided me so far started coming to me and discussing the nature of the menace from Red China about which I was known to have written a lot in earlier years. I told them that it was no time to discuss China anymore, and that what we needed now was military preparation. China had bared its face which Pandit Nehru and his kept press had tried to keep under a veil all these years. I could see quite clearly that a showdown with China was not far off, and that the country was prepared neither ideologically nor materially to face the challenge. I felt more and more angry with Pandit Nehru and his henchmen who were in control of India's establishment.

It had happened quite a few times that some Communist professor or writer came to our research department to meet one or the other of my colleagues. Whenever I was introduced to them, they said spontaneously, "Oh, you are that man!" I used to smile and tell them that I was pleased to know that they knew me so well when I had never heard of them. That had served to put them off. But the Communist I was introduced to in late 1959 was a well-known man. I had to admit that I knew him by his record in the service of the Soviet Union. He immediately launched a tirade, "Mr. Goel, when you people made all that noise about Hungary, we could understand. What happened in Hungary was a tragedy. It should not have happened. But when you make the same sort of noise about these dirty lamas, that is the limit." I lost my patience and told him that it was no use arguing with a Communist, and that the only thing that could penetrate his head was a bullet. His reference to the Tibetans as "dirty lamas" had made me feel mad. The Tibetans had done nothing that could justify the crimes that the Communist army from China was committing against them. He walked away after calling me a fascist. My heart sank. This man was very close to the Nehru brigade. I could guess which way the country was heading.

#### IV

Next year, I was loaned by my boss to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) to work as part-time secretary of the All India Panchayat Parishad

of which he was the president. I had met him a few times in earlier years. In fact, he was the first to whom Ram Swarup and I had gone in order to seek his blessings for our anti-communist work. He had said, "If you are opposed to Stalinism, I am wholly with you. But I see nothing wrong in Communism as such." I had asked him, "What about Leninism?" He had observed, "Leninism is all right." I had repeated a string of quotations from Lenin whom I had read recently. He had closed the discussion with the comment, "I don't know. My knowledge of Communist classics is quite old." So he was aware of my reputation, and had reacted rather negatively when my name was mentioned to him as a man who could help the Parishad stand on its feet. But he did not turn me down after I had had a brief talk with him at the Palam Airport where he had stopped on his way from Amritsar to Patna. He had gone to the Punjab to meet Master Tara Singh.

JP started liking me when he saw my work. But I could feel that he had reservations about my ideological inclinations. One day he asked me point-blank, "Are you a Socialist?" I said, "I have been." He continued, "That depends on one's evolution. What are you now?" I said, "I am a Hindu." He said, "That does not mean anything. I too am a Hindu." I blurted out, "I am not that sort of a Hindu." The next moment I was sorry for that remark. I could see that JP had not liked it. His face showed annoyance. But he was too much of a gentleman to put me in my place.

The showdown came unexpectedly. JP had invited an Englishman to deliver a lecture in the Panchayat Parishad. He was a retired policeman and had acquired the reputation of being a leading criminologist. I found that the man was an insufferable fool as soon as he opened his mouth. I wondered what JP had seen in him. The only explanation was JP's great weakness for the white skin. I had witnessed the weakness again and again. Now he sat enraptured as this arrogant Englishman poured unmitigated contempt on Hindu traditions, some of which he targeted as harbouring criminal tendencies. I stood up at the end of the lecture and asked him if he would answer some questions. He waved me aside, saying that he had no time for such tomfoolery. JP was furious with me soon after the man left. I had known that it was rather difficult for JP to lose his temper. But that day he did. He said to me angrily, "You have insulted my guest. I do not like such manners at all." I kept quiet.

Next day, I gave to JP my Hindi book, *Samyak Sambuddha*, which I had recently compiled from Buddhist classics. In its introduction I had

maintained that Buddhism was only a dimension of Sanātana Dharma which I had then proceeded to define. I requested JP to read just the introduction, if he could spare the time and had the inclination. I wanted him to know what I meant by Hinduism. JP said that he liked Buddhism very much, and that he would read the whole book. I had no hope that he would. But I was pleasantly surprised when I met him after a few days. He said, "I have to seek your forgiveness (*khsamā chāhtā hūn*) for losing my temper that day. I did not know that you were a scholar, and had made such a deep study of Buddhism. And I have simply fallen for the beautiful (*madhura*) Hindi you write." I was moved to tears, and touched his feet. He continued, "If Sanātana Dharma is what you say it is, I am all for it. You can count me as a Sanātanist from today. You can say to whomsoever you please that JP has become a Sanātanist." I felt very happy. My relations with JP became more or less smooth thereafter. I thought that my Hinduism was no more a matter of suspicion in his eyes. I have told elsewhere the story of how I was able to take JP on his first ever visit to an RSS camp.<sup>2</sup>

By now the Panchayat Parishad was in a functioning form. The constitution which I had drafted for it had been approved by the Ministry of Law, and the Ministry of Community Development had sanctioned a handsome grant for an Institute for Training in Panchayati Raj. The search was on for some competent Director to head the Institute when JP surprised everybody in the Governing Body of the Parishad by presenting a young man from Bombay to man the post. He had a doctoral degree in Chemical Engineering from a university in the USA. JP told us nothing more about him. But he looked at me, and said, "Sitaramji, he is a Muslim." I kept quiet. He said again, "Did you hear? He is a Muslim." Perhaps he was expecting that as a Hindu I would raise an objection. I raised none. I have never bothered about Muslims, one way or the other. Hindus who flaunt Muslims in order to prove their Secularism have always left me cold. Moreover, I had never fancied the Panchayat Parishad or any organization of that sort as my final destination. It was only a waiting room for me till such times as the train arrived for taking me where I wanted to go. Meanwhile, I was doing dutifully the work for which I was paid. I wondered why JP had tried to rub it in.

The staff in the Parishad and the Institute tried to involve me in

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 1 of *Perversion of India's Political Parlance*, Voice of India, New Delhi, 1984.

office politics with the new Director. They came to me with all sorts of stories about him. I refused to comment and disappointed them. One day, a man from Maharashtra dropped in. He had become famous for writing a report on "cooperative farming" after a brief visit to Red China. Pandit Nehru was using that report for introducing "joint farming" in this country. Years later, I learnt that his original report on "cooperative farming" in China had a chapter on how that programme had entailed a mass slaughter of peasants, and that he had dropped the chapter because Pandit Nehru thought it was not at all relevant. And this man was known at that time as a leading Gandhian. He sat down in front of me, and whispered, "Goelji, do you know that I am a Maratha?" I said, "Your name says it." He asked me next, "Do you know that we Marathas hate the Muslims?" I replied, "I have read Maratha history. I do not think your statement is true about all Marathas." He said, "In any case, I do not like Dr. ... whom JP has thrust upon us." I kept quiet. This man was in no way connected with the Panchayat Parishad. I could not understand why he was saying all this to me.

I came to know the game a few days later. JP called me and the Director for a meeting. As soon as we sat down, he turned to the Director and said, "You have no end of complaints against Sitaramji. Say in his presence what you have been saying to me, so that matters may be sorted out." The Director was non-plussed. He was not at all prepared for such a confrontation. For a few moments, he was struck dumb. His face was flustered. He recovered and said, "He told Shri ... that he hates Muslims." I narrated the conversation I had had with the noted Gandhian, word for word. JP smiled and said, "Shri ... has never been known for correct or careful reporting. Forget what he told you. Now, what is your next charge?" The Director fumbled, "He says that my degrees are fake." JP turned to me. I told him, "I would bother about degrees being fake or genuine only if I cared for them. Degrees have never meant anything to me. I have some good ones of my own." The Director had nothing more to say, and went away. JP asked me, "What degrees do you have? Can I see your bio-data?"

I had to compile it for the first time — my degrees, the certificates from my professors, the books I had written, and all that. As soon as JP finished reading it, he said to me, "What are you doing in organizations like the Panchayat Parishad? A man of your qualifications should be in the university. Find out who is the head of history department in Delhi. I will write to him, recommending you for a suitable teaching job." He wrote the letter next day when I gave him the name of the

Professor and Head of Department. It talked of me highly. But the Professor and Head was far from being impressed when I presented the letter to him. He looked at me without reading it, and said, "Oh! you are now in Delhi? Weren't you functioning from Calcutta?" The man was a fellow-traveller, as I found out soon after. JP received a reply a few days later. He read it and said to me, "It is a diplomatic letter. He will not let you have a job in the university. It seems he knows you quite well, and has strong reservations about you. I am sorry I cannot do more for you." I was more than thankful for what he had already done.

I had to leave the Panchayat Parishad after a few months. In spite of the confrontation between us in JP's presence, the Director had continued to poison JP's ears with all sorts of complaints against me. JP himself told me several times, "This person is full of venom against you." I kept quiet. I could sense that JP was feeling helpless. He could not drop the Director, though he was no more enamoured of him. JP's secularist image was at stake. At the same time, he was finding it difficult to overcome the feeling that my being a non-secularist Hindu had something to do with the trouble. One day he invited my boss and myself for sitting down and sorting it out. He started with what the Director had been saying. Suddenly, my boss stood up and pulled me up as well by taking hold of my hand. He said, "I am taking him away. He has done the job for which I had loaned him. Your Parishad is now functioning. And there is no dearth of work for him." We walked out. JP did not try to stop us. He must have felt relieved.

## V

It was inevitable that as I tended to become more and more of a convinced and conscious Hindu, I felt drawn towards the RSS and to its political platform, the BJS, both of which had the reputation of being "Hindu communalist organizations". I assumed that what was being described as "Hindu communalism" by the Nehruvians must be Indian nationalism. I must confess that I was in for great disillusionment. I discovered before long that except for some differences on the cow question, the character of Muslim invaders, and the status of Hindu heroes who fought those invaders, these organizations shared the Nehruvian consensus on all important issues, domestic and foreign. The BJS was fast moving towards an all-out Nehruvian stance under the leadership of a pompous windbag who saw no reason to hide that he enjoyed the company of Communists far more than that of his party colleagues.

When I expressed for the first time a desire to meet him, the secretary of the BJS told me, in all seriousness, that if I dropped in the Communist Party office in Windsor Place any afternoon, I would not miss him provided he was not out of Delhi. What was worse, the RSS and the BJS stalwarts spent almost all their time and energy in proving that they were not Hindu communalists but honest secularists.

My first contact with the RSS had developed when I was a second year student in college and a devout Gandhian. One fine morning two of my classmates had descended on me in my room in the hostel. Both of them were science students, and I knew them only by their faces. They mentioned my short story in Hindi which had appeared in the college magazine and won a prize, and harangued me to write on Hindu Rashtra. They told me that they were members of the RSS, and promised to elect me as the next editor of the magazine as they had the majority among the students. I had never heard of the RSS so far, and knew nothing about Hindu Rashtra. The ideal for me was the Rāma-Rājya as expounded by Mahatma Gandhi.

We met quite often thereafter. I drew a blank when I asked them for some literature which their movement had produced. Instead, they took me to the Vijayadashamī show which I have already mentioned. And the contact broke down when I found my new friends telling me, day after day, fantastic stories about Mahatma Gandhi. They were trying to prove that the Mahatma was nothing but a stooge of the Muslim League and an agent of the Amir of Afghanistan. I had never heard or read such stories before.

I am happy to note that, in recent years, the RSS has revised its evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi and his role. I can also see it now that those old stories originated in an agonized consciousness which had witnessed for years Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress refusing to be identified as Hindu but having no qualms about bargaining with the Muslim League on behalf of the Hindus. It had become a habit with the Mahatma and the Congress to take the Hindus for granted. But at that time, and in that state of my total ignorance about national politics, those stories sounded more than repulsive.

My next contact with the RSS developed during the course of my participation in the anti-communist work in Calcutta. Our group had waited on leaders of the Congress and the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) for seeking their cooperation in what we thought was a non-party national platform. Some of these leaders were impatient with our point of view, and advised us to fight Hindu communalism instead. Others were

nice, listened to us, and promised to call upon us in our office for further discussion. But none of them kept the promise. One day, a friend chided me for going to the wrong leaders, and took me to an RSS camp in Howrah. The leader I met there was more than sympathetic, and promised to visit our office as soon as the camp was over. He kept his promise, although our office had shifted to new premises in the meanwhile. He had gone to the old office, and found out our new address.

It was around this time that an Englishman who wrote regularly in the Calcutta weekly, *Capital*, characterised the RSS as a fascist organization. I knew him personally and as friendly towards our work. But I wrote to the weekly a letter saying that "those who call the RSS a fascist organization are fascists themselves". The letter was published. The Englishman telephoned to me next day. He said that he really did not know anything about the RSS, and that he had only followed the prevalent fashion. He was apologetic. Meanwhile, I had given a cutting of my printed letter to the RSS leader. He asked for a few more copies in print, which also I supplied. I came to know that he had circulated those copies in RSS circles in order to present me as a defender of the RSS against undeserved calumny. I did not know that it was an act of courage at that time to have a good opinion about the RSS. The opinion had come to me spontaneously as I started taking up a nationalist stand.

The help which this RSS leader provided to us in our anti-communist work was commendable. Some RSS young men managed our bookstalls in the Puja and other exhibitions, in the face of repeated threats from the Communists that they would allow no such "sacrilege in the heart of Calcutta". We came out with flying colours and sold a large number of our publications. Meanwhile, several RSS and BJS leaders visited our office and commended our work when they came to or passed through Calcutta in course their personal or party work. I came to know some of them quite well. But my greatest satisfaction was that the Congress and Socialist members of our group had met the "Hindu communalists" as comrades in a common battle, and shed some of their secularist self-righteousness.

One of the sequels of my contact with the RSS-BJS was that after we had to close down our anti-communist work, I was offered a BJS ticket for contesting from the Khajuraho parliamentary constituency in Madhya Pradesh during the Second General Elections in 1956-57. The local RSS worker, who was the manager of my campaign, had secured an assurance for support from the PSP. In the event, however, all arrangements broke down when that worker met an accident, and became

bed-ridden. Yet I could see the functioning of the RSS-BJS organization from close quarters. It had dedicated workers, and powerful speakers. The only thing the organization lacked was material resources. It was difficult for me to believe that a patriotic organization could be so poor. I had not yet met the Hindu Mahasabha people and did not know what poverty could really mean.

There were some revealing episodes during this election. The wall-posters which the BJS had got printed in Delhi, announced that one of the main BJS aims was to abolish untouchability. The field workers were against putting up these posters because they thought that the considerable conservative section in the electorate was likely to go against me in that event. But I stuck to my guns, and insisted that the posters be put up. I do not know if they were used. Secondly, I observed that the organizers of my public meetings did not relish my talk about principles involved between the Congress policies on the one hand, and the BJS policies on the other. They asked me, again and again, to go for the Congress men as dishonest Socialists and Secularists while presenting the BJS as an honest adherent of Socialism and Secularism. Thirdly, the organizers warned me not to plead for a ban on cow-slaughter, and not to say anything against Pakistan whenever the meeting happened to be in a Muslim locality. Lastly, they asked to use English words and phrases quite frequently in my speeches lest people concluded that I was uneducated. I did not relish these advices.

That was the background of my contact with the RSS-BJS when I returned to Delhi in 1957. The contact deepened in due course. I wrote quite often in the *Organiser*, and met RSS-BJS people more often. Most of them were quite friendly. The only unfriendly man I met was the windbag I have mentioned. His face showed a frown whenever he saw me, which was not unoften. The one suggestion which I made to every RSS and BJS leader I met, was that the movement should have a full-blooded Hindu ideology of its own and process all events, movements, parties, and public figures in terms of that ideology, rather than live on borrowed slogans or hand-to-mouth ideas invoked on the spur of the moment. They heard me patiently, and hardly ever contradicted me. But over a time, I realized that they did not take me seriously. Most of them were convinced that organization was all that mattered, and ideology was of little use. I was sure that they were greatly mistaken. I could see their plight quite clearly as they tried to operate according to ground rules laid down by their opponents. But they thought that my pre-occupation with ideology had something to do with my Communist

background. I felt helpless. I also felt annoyed when I heard speaker after speaker in RSS gatherings pouring contempt on "intellectuals" who had read the books but who knew nothing about "practical problems". One of their pet stories was about a pandit who frowned upon a boatman for not knowing Pāṇini, but whom the boatman pitied for not knowing swimming when the boat was in trouble.

What was most revealing to me about the RSS people was that, by and large, they did not react to expression of any opinion on any subject except that about their organization (*sangha*) and their leaders (*adhikāris*). One could say anything one chose about Hinduism, or Hindu culture, or Hindu society, or Hindu history, without drawing any reaction from an average RSS man. He became warm or cold only when something favourable or unfavourable was said about his organization, or his leaders, or both. I wondered what sort of a Hindu organization it was. I expected the RSS to be alive to Hindu causes rather than to the reputation of its organization or its leaders.

One day, a BJS leader asked me to write a book presenting the BJS to the West. I said that I knew very little about the BJS, and that it would be better if the job was undertaken by one of their own scholars. He said that the problem was that they had no scholars in their organization. I agreed to write the book but warned him that it would be pretty critical on the score of their policies. He showed surprise. He told me in a tone full of pity for me that I was a talented man, and could move up high in their organization provided I wrote the book and removed from his people's minds the lingering suspicion about me. I asked him, "What suspicion?" He smiled and said, "You ought to know. Most of our people think that you are..." He did not complete the sentence. I completed it for him, "... an American agent." I had to control myself. I told him that if any of his people needed a certificate for patriotism any day, he could come and get it from me. That was the end of my dalliance with the BJS.

My disillusionment with the RSS took some more time. The country was moving towards a clash with Red China. People had become dissatisfied with Pandit Nehru's foreign policy. But they believed that the Prime Minister had been misled by his Defence Minister and close confidant, Shri V.K. Krishna Menon. Few people were prepared to accept that the real architect of the nation's tragedy was Pandit Nehru himself. Menon was no more than Nehru's minion, with no standing of his own either in the Congress Party or in the country at large. By now I had read almost all published writings and speeches of Pandit Nehru,

and come to know him as a committed Communist. He had credited Red China with the work of "socialist construction" at home, and had been going about proclaiming that a "socialist country can harbour no hostile designs towards its neighbours". My problem was how to share my perception with my people. The press in India was more or less completely under the control of Communists, or fellow-travellers, or self-seeking sycophants.

I was, therefore, very happy when the RSS leader whom I had met in Calcutta and who had now moved very high in his organization, invited me to document Nehru's ideology in a series of articles in the *Organiser*. Starting with its issue of June 5, 1961, I wrote 17 articles under the general caption, *In Defence of Comrade Krishna Menon*. I was writing under a pseudonym, Ekaki. Not many people knew who was the writer. At least my boss was completely unaware that I had violated the pledge I had given to him. The articles were read widely in circles which normally never read the *Organiser*.

I was, therefore, surprised when I was collared one day by the windbag of the BJS, and rebuked roundly for writing "all that nonsense about the leader of the nation". I talked to the editor, who told me that he could not keep the secret from a man who was the topmost leader of the BJS. He also told me that the man had asked him not to have anything to do with "that notorious man (*badnām ādmī*)". I wanted to go to the windbag and ask him what crime I had committed except exposing the character of Communism and its instruments. But I did not care so long as I had the support of the RSS leader, whom I met every week. He was full of praise for my series.

My sixteenth article had just appeared. The RSS leader told me to go on, and not to stop till I reach "Nehru's policy in the present situation". He added that my series "had brought about a revolution in the thought of our people", that they were planning to publish the series in a book form as soon as it was finished, and that they would make it available to the people in lakhs of copies in all Indian languages. I felt satisfied with my work. My seventeenth article was already in the press. And I was preparing to move over to Pandit Nehru's policy vis-a-vis Red China.

But I was fated not to finish the series. When I met the RSS leader next week, I heard something which was just the opposite of what I expected. As I entered his room, he said in a cold and calculated tone, "*Sitārāmji, āpkō Nehrū kē sivāy kyā kōi kām nahīn hai? Ākhir Nehrū nē aisā kyā kar diyā jo ap hath dhokar uske piche pad gaye?*" (Mr. Sitaram,

do you have nothing to occupy you except Nehru? What has Nehru done to make you run after him with hammer and tongs?)” I was taken aback, and did not know what to say. The editor of the *Organiser* happened to drop in just at that moment. The leader barked at him, “*Yēh kyā Nehrū Nehrū lagā rakkhā hai? Apnē paper kā yēh kyā banā dālā tumnē? Band karō yēh Nehrū Nehrū. Kyā aur koi topic nahīn bachā?* (what is this cant about Nehru? What have you made of your paper? Stop this Nehru business. Is there no other topic left?)” The editor did not say a word. He was under RSS discipline. I fell from the skies. It was very difficult for me to believe that the man sitting in front of me with a grim face and unfriendly eyes was the same man who had praised my series so highly only a week ago. But that was the stark truth.

The country was at war with Red China soon after my seventeenth article appeared. I was being harassed by the Government. As soon as the first shots were fired on the northern border, I discovered that an intelligence man was following me wherever I went. He stood outside my office when I was there, and outside my home till late in the nights. One day, a friend informed me that I might get arrested very soon. He said that a rabid Nehruite had seen me sitting in the Coffee House, and wondered why an “anti-government person like Goel” was going scott free. He was a minor fry at that time but quite close to the establishment. Later on, he became a Minister in Indira Gandhi’s Government, and our ambassador in Moscow. Recently, he was an important Minister in the Janata Dal Government of Shri V.P. Singh. I had been told by one of his classmates in Lahore that he was a card-carrying Communist in pre-Partition days. I could very well understand why he felt annoyed with me. He was one of that mob which had been riding on Mao’s bandwagon when I was writing against the monster. I reminded the likes of him of their traitorous ways, and they felt uncomfortable whenever they saw me. But they were still in power, and I was nobody. I thought it wise not to annoy him. I stopped going to the Coffee House. I did not want to be in jail.

Eventually, I was not arrested for a rather strange reason. My name happened to be not only in the list of “anti-Government elements” but also in the list of “patriots” who were expected to wage a guerrilla war against China. It was November, 23, 1962. There was a strong rumour that India was going to be air-bombed by China very soon. I received a telephone from a Congress MP. She was a member of the Rajya Sabha. I hardly knew her, having met her briefly in Calcutta where she was

staying with a friend of mine on her return from Red China in 1954. She had seen the wonderland as a member of the parliamentary delegation led by Renu Chakravarty, the Communist MP in the Lok Sabha. She had seen my books on China at my friend's place, and invited me for a talk. She had said, "The horror that you have depicted in your books is nothing compared to what I have seen with my own eyes." My friend had asked her to take the country into confidence as people were being misled by Communist propaganda. She had barked back, "What are your intentions, young man? Do you want me to be a persona non grata with the Prime Minister?" Next morning her name was second in the joint statement saying that everything was wonderful in China. I had never met her again. Now she asked me to see her immediately.

As soon as I entered her drawing-room, she asked me to accompany her to see the Home Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. She told me that she had seen my name in the list of those who were likely recruits for the forthcoming guerrilla force, and taken the responsibility of producing me as soon as she could find me. According to her, the Government feared that the Chinese would occupy the whole of Eastern India, and estimated that it would take us years to liberate the land. As I had lived in that area and knew its people as well as its languages, I had been selected as excellent guerrilla material. I told her that on the one hand there was a move to put me behind the bars, and on the other I was being viewed as a soldier in the service of the nation. She laughed and said that most of the time the right hand of the Government did not know what its left hand did, and that I should not mind such "pin-pricks". But I minded, and walked out, saying that so long as Pandit Nehru was the Prime Minister of the country, I could be only a traitor to it. Years later I learnt that there was actually a move to organize a guerrilla force under the leadership of Shri Biju Patnaik.

Months passed and the vigil on me was withdrawn. I must confess that I was frightened all the while. I had a large family, and I was the only bread-earner. My old parents understood no politics. My children were still in school and college. I kept lying low. But the conviction that the truth about Pandit Nehru should be made known was still quite strong. So I thought of publishing my series as a book. It was far from finished. Still the facts it revealed about the Prime Minister went quite far. After a whole year had passed, I approached Vaidya Gurudatta who had read my series and liked it. He got it published in December, 1963.

I was feeling happy once again when Ram Swarup told me that my boss was under some sort of a pressure because of my book. I went to

him straight and asked him about the nature of the trouble. He became angry, and said, "There are Communists in our organization, and Socialists, and Jan Sanghis. All of them have freedom to express their opinions. Why should people object when you say what you believe intensely? This is supposed to be a democratic country. I am not going to yield, whatever the consequences." I told him that I did not want to jeopardise his position, and that he could provide protection to me again if he stayed in his place. Then I called his stenographer and dictated the draft of a letter terminating my services with immediate effect. My boss objected. "I thought," he said, "you were resigning. I am not *sacking* you." I said, "I have no honour to save. I am not going to get another job in Delhi. The only gain I care for right now is the three months' salary I will get if I am sacked. What do I get if I resign?" He got the draft typed, and signed it. As he handed the letter to me, I could see him fighting tears in his eyes. It was January 1964. I was on the street once again.

## VII

In the year 1964, Pandit Nehru was in no better position. He was alive. But the pep in him was gone. So also the bluster which he had used all his life to beat down his opponents. It was only the "progressive" brood he had spawned which was keeping his corpse propped up on the throne in the interest of its own survival. The leader was being made to look like a colossus in the very hour of his complete collapse. I remember very vividly what happened in the aftermath of our humiliation at the hands of the Chinese Communists in the winter of 1962.

The house that Pandit Nehru had built lay in shambles all around him. His pretensions as the custodian of world peace had been badly punctured by those very Chinese Communists whom he had promoted no end, and from every platform. In fact, he had become the laughing stock of the world in view of the sermons he had read to it earlier, day in and day out. The Soviet Union which he had served so well through thick and thin, and for years, had come out openly on the side of "our Chinese brethren". His Arab and Afro-Asian friends stood strictly aloof, practising the art of non-alignment they had learnt from the past-master. And he was crying desperately for help from quarters he had decried all along as "the camp of capitalism, colonialism, and war".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. III, OUP, 1984, pp. 211-19. The letter which Pandit Nehru wrote to President John F. Kennedy of the USA in November, 1962 has remained suppressed so far. People will know the pathetic state to which he had been reduced whenever that letter is published.

Nearer home, the Communist Party of India which he had patronized and promoted into a formidable political apparatus, was shying away from him. The majority in it will soon swear allegiance to Chairman Mao. The Muslim "minority" which had prospered no end under his Secularism, was more than happy at India's defeat and humiliation. It will wait for Pakistan to profit from India's predicament. The Second Five Year Plan which he had hailed in the hope that India would soon emerge as an industrial giant, had brought the country to the verge of a country-wide famine. His immediate successor, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, will face the grim situation in 1965-66.

By every canon of normal human reason and political sanity, it was time for stock-taking. The people at large were waiting for the discredited leader and his decrepit team to depart from the scene. They were in a mood to stand up and say, "You have been here too long for whatever worth you are. Now, in God's name, go!" But what I saw was the other way round. The leader as well as the team walked out of the turmoil not only unscathed but triumphant and truculent. The stock-taking that took place was in the camp of the innocents.

Pandit Nehru had been in the habit of threatening to resign, every now and then. It was his patent method of making the people protest that he was indispensable, and that the country would face ruin without him at the helm. He had succeeded every time in raising a storm in his favour, and discrediting whomsoever he chose to hound out of public life. This time he kept sticking to the throne like a limpet. In the words of Brigadier Dalvi, he did not have the decency even to go through the motions of resigning. All he had to do was to compose some poetry about "getting out of touch with reality in the modern world" and "living in an artificial atmosphere of our creation,"<sup>4</sup> and the establishment asked the people to shed tears. The flock of the faithful as well as the sycophants sprang into action as never before. A cry reverberated across the country that Nehru's hands needed strengthening for "beating back the reactionaries who want to put the clock back, and tiding over the national crisis". A mammoth procession led by Comrade S.A. Dange marched to the Parliament house, thundering in support of the "Great Leader and his policies of peace and progress". I saw Pandit Nehru with my own eyes, standing on the parapet and watching the procession as it reached near the northern gate of the Parliament house. But the very next day he denied that he was there.

The climax of this calculated operation was reached in the Kamrai

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

Plan which followed soon after. Congress leaders who had had no say in the shaping of national policies, foreign or domestic, were eased out of the positions they held in the Government, both at the Centre as well as in the States. They were "needed for party work among the people". Nobody was deceived. Mahavir Tyagi told Pandit Nehru to his face, "*Yārōñ kē sir kṛta kar sardār ban gayē* (so you have become the head-man by getting the heads of your comrades chopped off)!" But nobody dared challenge the cynical exercise. Pandit Nehru and his flock had had another field day.

Had Pandit Nehru been only an individual who had risen to the top on the strength of his own merit, or because circumstances had conspired to catapult him into power, his glory would have departed when his leadership suffered a serious set-back in 1962. The human norm that nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure, would have applied to him also. Had the ideology he had espoused been his personal choice, it would have gone into oblivion with the tragic end of the era over which he had presided. But what has happened is just the opposite. The graver the faults that have come to notice in Pandit Nehru's character as a man, as a political leader, and as a thinker, the more frantic has been the effort to prop up his image. The greater the failure that policies pursued by him have suffered, the louder has been the clamour to continue them in their pristine purity. It appears that a whole establishment has been hell-bent on selling Pandit Nehru as a permanent hero, and Nehruism as a panacea for all ills, at all times.

Small wonder that the "great man's daughter", Mrs. Indira Gandhi, succeeded in riding roughshod over all sorts of "reactionaries" in the Congress Party and the country at large. The "progressives" flocked to her camp from every corner, and made her loom large like her father. She surrounded herself with Communists and fellow-travellers of all hues, recruited directly and openly from the Communist Party of India and its fronts. They helped her to the hilt to push her father's policies farther afield. In the bargain, they monopolized all positions of power and prestige in the Congress Party, in the Government, in the voluntary agencies, in the media and the academia, in short, in the whole establishment. A Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was created for collecting Stalinist professors from all over the country, and financed on a fabulous scale. The arrogance with which the "professors" started speaking on every subject under the sun, had to be known in order to be believed.

In the next few years, the Nehruvian flock multiplied fast, and

several fold. Now it felt strong enough to demand a committed Congress Party cadre, a committed Parliament, a committed press, a committed judiciary, a committed bureaucracy, and a committed armed force. The only commitment which was neither remembered nor mentioned any more was the commitment to democracy that had been sold, particularly by Pandit Nehru's supporters in the USA, as the hallmark of India's "experiment in Socialism". Nehruism had come out in its true colours. The country had been reduced to a private fief of the Nehru dynasty, and pulverized by those who pretended to be its custodians.

The emergency that followed was not at all an ad hoc idea adopted for meeting an abrupt situation. The idea of imposing an authoritarian rule on the country had been maturing in the mind of the Nehruvian flock for years before it materialized in the life of the people. The situation, too, was being shaped in that direction by the self-righteousness and consequent high-handedness that had accompanied the idea. The seeds sown by Pandit Nehru were flowering, and bearing fruit. Once again, his flock was in the forefront of the "battle being waged for beating back the forces of fascism". And by the time Mrs. Indira Gandhi realized what was happening on the ground, it was already too late. Much mischief had been done in the meanwhile. Key institutions of the country had been subverted. They have never been the same again.

The story of how I survived and stood on my feet once more is no uncommon story. There is no dearth of people in the world who suffer setbacks, struggle, and come up again. Sometimes it is help from unexpected quarters. Sometimes it is hard work. Sometimes it is sheer good luck. In my case it was all three. A cousin came to my help, and gave me not only moral support but also the material means I needed. I worked very hard. Above all, I had lots of good luck. In the next four years, I succeeded in building an independent business.

During the years 1964–1977 I took no part in the public life of the country. I just watched the events unfolding and taking the country downhill. A friend taunted every now and then that I was after all a "bloody *baniā* (merchant)" who had reverted to his right profession. Another friend complained that he missed my style of writing, though he had never liked that style. What could I say? I was in no position to convince anyone about anything.

There was a brief interlude in 1967–69 when various opposition parties came together and formed *Samyukta Vidhāyaka Dal* (SVD)

Governments in various States all over North India. But most of it was no more than a show of rowdyism which rehabilitated the Congress Party in the eyes of the people. For the rest, it was Mrs. Indira Gandhi's show till she imposed the Emergency in June, 1975.

My participation in public activity in 1977, on the eve of the historical General Elections, was brief. I was invited to join a group which was entrusted with the job of preparing press releases for the combine which was ranged against Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was in this group that I met Shri Arun Shourie for the first time. What I noted about him was that he was extremely polite and soft-spoken. I had no notion at that time that in the years to come he was going to emerge as the foremost scholar-journalist and to present national problems in a correct perspective.

People's enthusiasm for the combine against Mrs. Indira Gandhi had to be seen in order to be believed. The meetings addressed by leaders of the opposition attracted vast crowds. On the other hand, the meetings of the Congress Party, even those addressed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, were thinly attended. I saw a meeting in which there was no audience, only the Congress leaders sitting on a large platform. The man who had supplied the carpets and the chairs was worried that his goods were going to be stolen as nobody was sitting on them.

Equally unprecedented were the scenes when the results came out. My journalist friend from America was in Delhi. By now he had become the Chief Editor of the prestigious *Forbes Magazine* published from New York. He was amazed when he saw the people dancing in the street outside newspaper offices on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg. He said he had not witnessed such scenes when India became independent in 1947.

I must confess that I was also carried away by the popular enthusiasm, and thought that things were going to change at last. The only one I saw keeping his cool, was Ram Swarup. He was happy that the Emergency was over. But he did not expect much from the combine which soon became the Janata Party. He said to me several times that people did not change simply because they gave themselves a new party label. He had been saying for some time that in India there was a multiplicity of parties but a unity of slogans. He proved right in a matter of days. The Janata Party turned out to be another bunch of rowdies except for its Jana Sangh component, and reminded one of the SVD days.

I had lost contact with the RSS-BJS leaders after my experience

with them in 1962. But I had not lost interest in what was regarded as the only Hindu movement still alive. The Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha had become more or less moribund. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram were busy proving that they were "universal" rather than Hindu. But the reports I received about developments in the RSS-BJS were pretty depressing.

The BJS had been taken over more or less completely by the windbag. He shared not only Pandit Nehru's ideology but also the latter's temper when it came to dealing with party colleagues. He had succeeded in silencing or hounding out those few in the BJS who had the courage to say that they did not subscribe to the Nehruvian consensus on Socialism, Secularism, Non-Alignment, and the rest. I wondered whether all this was happening with the active or passive assent of the RSS bosses. Some people said, yes. Others said that the RSS bosses were helpless in the face of the windbag's popularity and pull with the crowds.

I had a chance to go to a public meeting addressed by the windbag in December, 1971. We were at war with Pakistan over the liberation of Bangladesh. The latest reports said that a US fleet had sailed from Bangkok and was heading towards the Bay of Bengal. It was a time for worry. But the windbag thundered, "*Amrikā kā jō bēḍa Bangāl kī khādi kī aur badh rahā hai, uskā ēk jahāz wāpas nahīn jānē pāyē* (not a single ship of the American fleet advancing towards the Bay of Bengal, should be allowed to go back)." The crowd gave him a standing ovation. I wondered whether he knew what the US fleet represented, and I walked away. It was the first public meeting of the windbag which I had ever attended. It proved to be the last.

The metamorphosis of the RSS was no less noticeable. The RSS had never cared to understand Islam or its dynamics in India. I had heard with my own ears Guru Golwalkar proclaiming from a public platform that he honoured Islam no less than his own Hindu Dharma, that the Quran was for him as holy as the Veda, and that he regarded Prophet Muhammad as one of the greatest men known to human history. Some RSS leaders, therefore, felt fulfilled when they came in close contact and fraternized with the mullahs of the Jam'at-i-Islāmī, while they were together in jail during the Emergency. I myself heard some of them saying, "We were in the dark about Islam till we met these Muslim divines. Now we know what Islam really stands for." I asked one of them, "Have you ever studied the classics of Islam on your own? How could you judge that what the mullahs were selling to you

was not misinformation?" He smiled, and dismissed me as incorrigible. I could see that there was a will to believe in what the mullahs had presented as Islam. There was no problem if Islam was that wonderful. It was as simple as that.

So the RSS-BJS had fallen fully in line with the Nehruvians and earned in full measure the treatment they received from the Congress and Socialist components in the Janata Party. In spite of the fact that the RSS-BJS had suffered the most and sent the largest number of men to jail during the Emergency, and in spite of the fact their presence in the Parliament was also the largest, their status in the Janata Party was no more than that of cup-bearers whom anybody could kick. To start with, there was a whispering campaign that the Party was in danger of being taken over by "the communalists". Next, the Socialists launched an open campaign that either the RSS should become boy scouts of the Janata Party or the Jana Sanghis in the Party should sever their relation with the RSS. Finally, the RSS was asked to drop the word "Hindu" from its constitution and admit Muslims in its ranks.

The windbag who was the leader of the Jana Sangh group in the Janata Party endorsed the demand of the Socialists. He wrote an article in the *Indian Express* saying that the RSS was after all a political movement, and as such should have no hesitation in parting with its "cultural pretensions". Shri L.K. Advani was the only one in the Jana Sangh group to state publicly that he was proud of his association with the RSS. But he had counted without the RSS bosses. They readily agreed to consider the Socialists' proposal in their next General Body meeting. The situation was saved only by the fall of the Janata Government in 1979.

A friend who was an insider of the Janata Party told me that the Soviet President, Kosygin, who was on a visit to India during the Janata Party days, did not feel quite sure how his meeting with the Minister of External Affairs would turn out. He was under the impression that the Minister belonged to a "reactionary" movement. But when he met the Minister, he was pleasantly surprised to find that "this guy is more progressive than my own Communists comrades in India". There was a move to replace our ambassador in Moscow appointed during the Indira Gandhi regime. The ambassador was known to be Moscow's man rather than India's envoy. The Minister put down his foot — "Nothing doing. He is one of my best friends." He also tried to get into the Rajya Sabha a well-known columnist who has been a life-long Hindu-baiter and an ardent advocate of every Islamic cause. Failing that, the Minister

pulled away Syed Shahabuddin from the latter's desk in the External Affairs Ministry and sent him up to the Rajya Sabha as "the right type of Muslim leader we have been looking for". The Syed has not failed his sponsor in India's politics.

The crowning glory of the windbag, however, was the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the formulation of its philosophy as Gandhian Socialism. In the new party's flag, the green colour of Islamic *jihād* shared honours with the *bhagwa* (ochre) colour of Hindutva. Nobody in the RSS or the BJP seemed to know or cared to remember what the Islamic colour had stood for in the history of India, and what it signified for India's future. So we had one more platform for shouting Nehruvian slogans. Only it proved to be one too many in the 1984 General Elections. People decided to vote for the original and the genuine Congress Party rather than for its carbon copy.

### VIII

I resumed my regular meetings with Ram Swarup in 1977, after a long lapse during which I was busy building a business. By now I was more or less free from family responsibilities also. The discussions that developed were very rewarding. The most frequent theme was the character of Islam and Christianity, and what these closed creeds aspired to do to our people and culture.

Meanwhile, Islam had resumed its offensive in India. Petro-dollars from oil-rich Islamic countries were pouring in for equipping all sorts of Islamic missionaries and militants. A Muslim weekly had put it straight. Allah, it said, was not a fool to have put all that wealth under the floor of Islamic countries. Muslims, it asserted, were meant to be masters of the world. And India, it pointed out, was their unfinished business. Similar articles had appeared elsewhere in the Islamic world.

At the same time, the Christian missionary apparatus had perfected its theologies of Indigenization and Liberation. The theologians had no doubt that India was destined to be the land of Jesus Christ. Leading lights of the national revival such as Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were being portrayed as devotees of "the only Son of the only True God".

The most depressing aspect of the whole situation, however, was that there was practically no voice of protest against these forces of subversion. The methods and means which these forces were mobilizing had not even been noticed. The only movement which was supposed to be a Hindu movement and expected to come to the defence of

Hindu society and culture, was busy proving its secularist credentials. The Janata Party swore more by Mahatma Gandhi than by Pandit Nehru. But it was not the Mahatma Gandhi who had proclaimed that he was a staunch Sanātanist Hindu. Instead, it was a Mahatma Gandhi invented by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia for window-dressing his own variety of Secularism. Small wonder that Imam Bukhari of the Jāma' Masjid in Delhi was striding the scene like a colossus. Politicians of all hues were paying homage to him. He had never had it so good.

Ram Swarup was feeling disturbed. He had no doubt that Hindu society was in for great trouble. He had been studying the scriptures of Islam and Christianity during the past several years, and had gone deep into their most orthodox sources. He had come up with the conclusion that they were not religions but cruel and intolerant ideologies like Communism and Nazism. The spread of these ideologies in India, he said, was fraught with fearful consequences for whatever had survived of Hindu society and culture in the only Hindu homeland.

Around this time, I had an occasion to read the typescript of a book he had finished writing in 1973, and laid aside. It was a profound study of Monotheism, the central dogma of both Islam and Christianity, as well as a powerful presentation of what the monotheists denounce as Hindu Polytheism. I had never read anything like it. It was a revelation to me that Monotheism was not a religious concept but an imperialist idea. I must confess that I myself had been inclined towards Monotheism till this time. I had never thought that a multiplicity of Gods was the natural and spontaneous expression of an evolved spiritual consciousness.

My mind went back to 1949 when I had read Ram Swarup's typescript, *Russian Imperialism: How to Stop It*. He had followed it up in 1950 with his *Communism and Peasantary: Implications of Collective Agriculture for Asia*. These books had made me sit up vis-a-vis the menace which Communism represented. Now I sat up vis-a-vis the menace represented by Islam and Christianity. I decided to publish Ram Swarup's new magnum opus. It was titled *The Word As Revelation: Names of Gods* when it was brought out in 1980. Our friend from college days and now the Chief Editor of *The Times of India*, Girilal Jain, rang me up after reading this book, and said, "Sita, Ram Swarup has written the book of *his* life, and you have published the book of *your* life." It was reviewed in *The Times of India* by the noted Aurobindonian, Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghosh, under the caption, "Return of the Gods". The reviewer had pin-pointed the central theme in Ram Swarup's reflections.

As our discussions developed, I found that Ram Swarup was concerned more about the menace from Islam than that from Christianity. He observed that Christianity had had its teeth knocked out in the modern West, and that though it was still capable of doing considerable mischief in India, it was bound to collapse as soon as its rationalist review in the West became known to our people. Islam, on the other hand, had so far remained free from even a rationalist review. Hindu saints and scholars had hardly ever questioned its exclusive and superior claims. The only exception was Swami Dayananda. In recent times, the Hindu refrain had been that Islam taught the same truths as Hinduism. The slogan of *sarva-dharma-samabhāva* was providing grist to the mills of Secularism, the smoke-screen behind which Islam and Christianity were stealing a march. Add to it the systematic distortion of India's history which the Stalinist historians of Aligarh and the JNU had undertaken from their power positions in the Nehruvian establishment. They were insisting that Islamic heroes be accepted as national heroes, while they were converting Hindu heroes into villains.

Ram Swarup was not satisfied with a merely rationalist review of Islam and Christianity. He wanted these ideologies to be processed from the point of view of yogic spirituality of Sanātana Dharma. And he had developed the framework for placing these creeds where they belonged in the scale of yogic consciousness.

Our problem, according to Ram Swarup, was not Muslims but Islam. An overwhelming majority of Muslims in India (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) were our own people. They had been alienated from us by Islam. But Hindu society had remained preoccupied with the Muslim behaviour pattern, while bestowing praises on Islam as a great religion. This was suicidal for Hindu society. The Muslim behaviour pattern had to be traced back to the belief system which sanctioned it. It was the belief system which had to be exposed.

A marked feature of the Muslim behaviour pattern had been the Muslim proneness to take to the streets on the slightest pretext. Street riots had been used by Islam as a major weapon for carving out Pakistan. They were being used in the India that remained for enforcing all sorts of Muslim demands. And street riots by Muslims cannot be stopped unless Islam was cured of its aggressive self-righteousness. Hindus were doing exactly the reverse of what should be done. They were blaming the Muslims and not Islam which provided the inspiration for street riots.

Ram Swarup was sure that the only effective way to stop street riots was to move the Hindu-Muslim dialogue from the streets to the level of human minds. That was possible only if Hindus studied Islam from its own sources, and rejected its claims. So long as Hindus recognized Islam as a religion, it was unlikely to shed its aggressiveness and accept peaceful coexistence. We had the precedents of Christianity and Communism before us. Christianity in the West had to shed its self-righteousness and reform itself when it was subjected to a free and frank discussion in modern times. The ideological spread of Communism also had come to a halt in the Western democracies when Western scholars examined its tenets and made them known to the people at large.

One day in late 1981, I put it to Ram Swarup, "I have completed sixty years of my life. I have done whatever I was destined to do for my family. If you feel that I can be of help to the cause of Hinduism, I can retire from business and take to writing again. I should like to devote the rest of my life to informing Hindu society about its own great heritage, as also about the dangers it faces. Only I would have to consult my sons, and find out if they can spare me for a work dear to my heart." Ram Swarup gave his consent.

I placed the proposal before my sons the very next day. Their response was more than positive. One of them observed, "You can do business as well as this other work. Business is something which we also can manage. But you alone among us can undertake the other work. We are prepared to take over the business whenever you want to be free from it. We can always consult you if we have any problem." I was very happy to hear that from them. The VOICE OF INDIA was born that day, though Ram Swarup suggested that name several days later.

My next problem was how to resume writing on subjects relevant to the new situation. I had lost the habit of writing on serious subjects, having written nothing except business letters and account books over the past fifteen years. It was quite a struggle to rearrange appropriate ideas in my mind, and put them down on paper. For several weeks, all I could create were heaps of torn sheets. But I was keeping the company of Ram Swarup. It was not too long before my pen started writing coherent sentences..

Strangely enough, Shri K.R. Malkani, editor of the *Organiser*, had never given me up as a writer. He had continued to write letters to me all these year, suggesting subjects on which I could contribute articles to his weekly. I had thought that it was very kind of him, though I had never replied to his letters. Now I went to his office, and asked him if

he would consider a few series which I had in my mind. He agreed immediately.

That is how those series started, one after another — *How I Became A Hindu, Hindu Society Under Siege, An Experiment with Untruth, Defence of Hindu Society, History of Heroic Hindu Resistance to Islamic Invaders*. I was now spending several afternoons every week in the office of the *Organiser*, seeing proofs, meeting other visitors, and talking to Shri Malkani. I was my old self once again. Now I found it difficult to believe that I had been a businessman for more than fifteen years.

I discovered it in due course that my series in the *Organiser* were being noticed in the secularist circles. A secularist scribe whom I chanced to meet at a friend's place asked me in a resentful tone, "How many series do you plan to write?" I told him, "One hundred, unless I die or become bed-ridden in the meanwhile." And I meant it. I had many themes in my mind. I was spending long hours at my desk, scanning source materials and writing articles.

What encouraged me most at this time was the spate of letters I received from the readers. They came to my own address as well as to the editor of the *Organiser*. They came from all parts of India, and also from abroad, particularly the UK and the USA. All of them were full of praise for my knowledge of facts, and my capacity to put them across in a proper perspective. I felt grateful to the readers. I also felt embarrassed once in a while when I was compared to some stalwart of Hindu awakening in the recent past. One letter was very brief, and was addressed to the editor. It said that "Sita Ram Goel is the most wonderful thing that has happened to the *Organiser*". I must confess that I felt flattered.

And then it happened again. The blow that came was not as swift and sudden as last time. But it was a blow all the same. The only difference was that this time it did not leave me shattered, as it had done on the previous occasion.

I was reviewing H.V. Seshadri's book, *The Tragic Story of India's Partition*, in a series captioned *Muslim Separatism: Causes and Consequences*. As the proofs came one day, I found that some of the significant passages regarding sufis were missing from the composition by the printing press. I picked up the typed copy, and saw that those passages had been crossed out with red pencil. I turned to Shri Malkani, and asked him if he had done it. He would not look me in the eyes, but muttered, "We have to live with them." I observed, "I was also trying to see that they learn to live with us." He did not reply.

Shri Malkani was sacked soon after. I do not know the whole story. All I came to know much later was that his failure to stop me from writing regularly in the *Organiser* was one of the reasons for the sorry outcome. But at that time I did not suspect it that I had something to do with his departure from a weekly which he had served for so many years, so much so that the *Organiser* had come to mean Malkani and Malkani the *Organiser*. The ways of party bosses are always inscrutable.

Shri V.P. Bhatia who took over as the next editor turned out to be as fine a gentleman as Shri Malkani. But what could he do in the face of pressure from the politicians? He did not cross out passages from my articles. But he did drop broad hints that my articles were no more wanted. I have a thick skull when it comes to picking up hints. Even so I understood that something had gone wrong somewhere. I told Shri Bhatia that I would stop as soon my current series, *Perversion of India's Political Parlance*, came to an end. I did. But I wanted to know what had happened.

After a few months, I ran into a big boss of the RSS. I had been told that he had something to do with the ban on my writings. I asked him straight, "Why have you stopped my series in the *Organiser*?" He said, "*kabhi kabhi likhiye* (write once in a while)." The cat came out of the bag when I chanced to meet another big boss of the RSS after a few months. He was on his way to attend a Vishva Hindu Parishad rally in the USA. As I put the question to him, he pointed his finger at me, and barked, "You ... you go out and attack Islam. How will then any Muslim come to us?" His tone was sharp. In fact, there was a touch of temper in his voice. I had met him earlier, once or twice, and thought that he was politeness personified. Now I was meeting a different man — the big boss of the Hindu movement. Even so, I asked him, "But do you really want the Muslims to come to you?" He started, "As a strategy..." I did not care to hear him any further, and walked out of his room. I had been sick of this word "strategy" ever since I turned away from Communism. I had seen this word strewn like autumn leaves in Marxist-Leninist literature. In any case, there was no room for complaint, now that I knew the party line put forward. The only thing that was not quite clear to me was the RSS-BJP clamour that the secularist parties were pampering the Muslims for cornering their votes. To me it looked like another case of the kettle calling the pot black.

I have never bothered about party bosses or moneybags, having seen quite a few of them from close quarters. They are lured by power

or lucre or both, most of the time. Nor have I ever been an aspirant to any privileged position. So I went ahead. I knew that Hindu society was much larger than many RSS-BJP put together. I decided to go to my people with the truth as I saw it. I was open to correction, but not to craftiness glorified as strategy. The response has been rewarding.

I could function this time because I had my own money. A few friends from Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras gave me some more. All I was looking for now was scholars who could tell the truth straight. Fortunately, I met some of them soon — Dr. Harsh Narain, A.K. Chatterjee, Prof. K.S. Lal, Koenraad Elst, Rajendra Singh, Sant R.S. Nirala, and Shrikant Talageri. More scholars are sure to join us as time passes. Meanwhile, Girilal Jain, Arun Shourie, Swapan Dasgupta and some others have been keeping the flag flying on their own. Hats off to them

The first problem I faced as a publisher was the Emergency imposed by Islam ever since its advent in India. One has all the freedom to praise Islam, its prophet, its scripture, its heroes, and its “contribution to Indian culture”. But one is not free to ask a few questions or present the real facts relating to these very subjects. The Vedas, the Epics, the Purāṇas, and every other book which Hindus hail as holy can be discussed, even denounced. So also every Hindu God and Goddess, every Hindu hero, every Hindu tradition, and every Hindu social institution. But saying that Muhammad was not the last prophet, that the Quran is not the final revelation, and that Islam is not the only true religion continues to cause trouble. Such statements invited death penalty so long as Islam had a monopoly of military power in this country. After that, they have been inviting clauses of the law code, and street riots if the law happens to be negligent once in a while.

It was not long before I was visited by officers of the Crimes Department, and not only from Delhi. I was accused of causing “communal discord”, and threatening the peace of the land. I was arrested, and ordered to seek bail. The Station House Officer in Delhi who locked me up for twenty-four hours, was mighty pleased with his performance. He boasted loudly that he had prevented a big street riot in Delhi. He invited me to accompany him and see for myself the missiles which the local Muslims had piled up on the roofs of their houses, apart from the firearms inside. When I asked him why he had not got the missiles removed and the firearms flushed out, he snarled, “Address your question to the big bosses of the political parties. I am only a small fry trying to earn my daily bread.”

I had been arrested in the classic case of Ram Swarup's

documented study, *Understanding Islam through Hadis: Religious Faith or Fanaticism?* This book had been published in the USA in 1982, thanks to the efforts of Shri Arvind Ghosh of Houston, Texas. VOICE OF INDIA had brought out an Indian reprint in 1983. There had been loud talk in the book market at Delhi that this book was going to be banned. I had waited with bated breath. But nothing had happened for two years. So I had got it translated into Hindi, and sent the printed sheets of two thousand copies to the binder. A Muslim mob had materialized outside the binder's shop, and threatened to burn down the establishment. The Station House Officer, I have mentioned, had appeared on the scene in a matter of minutes, and carried away all the sheets as well as the binder. In the next few hours I had been picked up.

The Delhi Administration which was under Congress rule at that time, appointed two screening committees, one after another, to examine the Hindi translation and find out if it had departed from the English original, or if the English original itself contained any objectionable matter. Both the committees came to the same conclusion — there was nothing objectionable, either in the English original or in the Hindi translation; both of them had only summarized faithfully an orthodox Islamic scripture. The Delhi Administration sent the case to the Metropolitan Court, and requested that it should be dismissed. But the Jam'at-i-Islāmi weekly, *Radiance*, raised a hue and cry, accusing the author and the publisher of insulting the Prophet. The court waited for some Muslims to appear and show why the case should not be dismissed. No one appeared. So the court dismissed the case on September 28, 1991. But the Delhi Administration issued a notification in November, 1991, stating that the Hindi translation will stand banned whenever it is published. In March 1992, the same Administration banned the English original also. By then the English original had been in circulation for nearly ten years. Meanwhile, two Indian reprints had been sold out. There is a great demand for this book even now. But I remain helpless.

I will close this chapter with my comments on the Ayodhya movement. Ram Swarup had seen in this movement an opportunity to educate the Hindus about the character of Islam. As early as 1983, he had asked me to put my knowledge of history and archaeology to some use, and compile a directory of Hindu temples destroyed by the Islamic invaders and rulers down the centuries. The Muslim monuments which had come up on the sites and/or built with materials of Hindu temples had to be highlighted. I had got busy with source materials which were voluminous and in several languages. It was going to be a big job.

Muslim leaders and Stalinist "historians" were raising a howl about "Hindu chauvinism" when it came to the notice of Arun Shourie, the Chief Editor of the *Indian Express* at that time, that some significant passages had been omitted from the English translation of an Urdu book written long ago by the father of Ali Mian, the famous Muslim theologian from Lucknow. He wrote an article, *Hideaway Communalism*, in the *Indian Express* of February 5, 1989 pointing out how the passages regarding destruction of Hindu temples and building of mosques on their sites at Delhi, Jaunpur, Kanauj, Etawah, Ayodhya, Varanasi and Mathura had been dropped from the English translation published by Ali Mian himself. This was a new and dramatic departure from the norm observed so far by the prestigious press. Publishing anything which said that Islam was less than sublime had been taboo for a long time. I was pleasantly surprised, and named Arun Shourie as the Gorbachov of India. He had thrown open the windows and let in fresh breeze in a house full of the stinking garbage of stale slogans.

I was still more surprised when he invited me to document for his paper what I knew on the subject. I had tried to get into the prestigious press again and again with documented articles on Communism, Islam, and Christianity, but had given up after being rebuffed every time. The big press, I had been told, was meant for respectable writers. I had kept a tally of the respectable tribe. I had discovered that most of them were the Big Liers about the Soviet Union, Red China, India's history, Hindu society and culture, and "the achievements of Islam and Christianity in this country". The most successful among these worthies were the professional Hindu-baiters. They pocketed the fattest cheques for heaping filth on everything Hindu, and that too in a press owned by Hindu moneybags.

I promised to Arun Shourie that I would send an article very soon. He asked me to write more than one and cover the subject adequately. So I wrote three articles, fully documented from unimpeachable Islamic sources, and showing that destroying other people's places of worship was a favourite pastime of practically all Muslim rulers in medieval times, and a pious performance in Islam after the precedent had been set by the Prophet himself. The first article was published on February 19, 1989. It was illustrated with facsimiles of six Islamic inscriptions saying that Allah and the Prophet had blessed the pulling down of Hindu temples and the raising of mosques in their places, mostly with their materials.

Arun Shourie had shown great courage. But he had counted

without the secularist crowd which had access to the owner of the *Indian Express*. He told me on the phone that there was some trouble brewing. I have never talked to him about the nature of the trouble, and do not know if my articles had anything to do with his ouster from the *Indian Express* next year. All I know is that he had to slow down the publication of my next two articles. They were to appear in the weeks following February, 19. Actually they appeared on April 16 and May 21.

Meanwhile, the Ayodhya movement had gathered momentum after the 1989 General Elections in which the BJP achieved spectacular success. It was in December, 1989 that a Belgian young man, Koenraad Elst, dropped in at my office. He had picked up a copy of my book, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters*, from some bookshop, and had become keen to see me after reading it. We discussed the character of what was being described as Hindu awakening. I gave him some of VOICE OF INDIA publications, and he went away to Ayodhya and Varanasi. When he returned after two weeks he expressed surprise that he had not been able to locate a single book presenting the Hindu case on Ayodhya. I told him that in late 1983 a VHP leader had collared me after a seminar, and asked if I had any proof that a temple existed where the Babri mosque stood at present. I had expected the VHP to produce some literature during the six years that had passed since then. Koenraad Elst was, however, aware that Dr. Harsh Narain and A.K. Chatterjee had come out with positive proofs in the meanwhile. I then took him to Ram Swarup, as I do in the case of everybody who comes to me and shows sympathy for Hindu causes. On the eve of his departure, Koenraad Elst asked me if I would publish a book on Ayodhya which he planned to write on his return to Belgium, I did not take him seriously. I did not know at that time that the thirty-one years old Belgian we had met was a prodigy, and that he felt so deeply about Hindus having a good case but presenting it very badly.

The script of his *Ram Janmabhoomi Vs. Babri Masjid: A Case Study in Hindu-Muslim Conflict*, was dropped on my table by the postman exactly after a month. I could not stop after I started reading it. I took it to Ram Swarup the same evening. He read it during the night and rang me up next morning. Koenraad Elst's book, he said, should be published immediately.

I had just published a book, *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them*, Volume I, *A Preliminary Survey*. It carried the articles by Arun Shourie, Dr. Harsh Narain, Ram Swarup, and myself, published in the

*Indian Express*. Two articles which Jay Dubashi had written in the *Organiser* on the significance of the Shilanyasa at Ayodhya simultaneously with the fall of the Berlin Wall were added to it. I also wrote a new chapter, *Let the Mute Witnesses Speak*, for this book. This chapter carried a list of around two thousand Muslim monuments which, according to literary and/or archaeological evidence stood on the sites of Hindu temples and/or had Hindu sculptures embedded in their masonry. The location of these Muslim monuments was also indicated in the list, place-wise, district-wise, and state-wise. The list has now become famous, though it touches only the tip of the iceberg.

Soon after Koenraad Elst's book was also ready, Ram Swarup and I went to Shri L.K. Advani for requesting him to release the two books in a public function. He agreed, though he was not quite keen about the compilation on Hindu temples in general. And he used the public function on 13 August 1990 for announcing that he would try to persuade the VHP to drop their claims on the sites of the Vishvanath Temple at Varanasi and the Krishnajanmabhūmi at Mathura, provided the Muslims agreed to give up the Rāmajanmabhūmi site at Ayodhya. At the same time he chided me for using strong language ("*Sitārāmji tō tikhē hō jātē haiñ*"). I wondered if he had read my articles in the book on temples. A friend who had known and relished my earlier style had chided me for making my style scholarly. The people present were stunned. Girilal Jain who presided over the function minced no words while pointing out that the much-applauded Hindu tolerance was nothing more than Hindu cowardice most of the time. But none of this appeared in the press next morning. It was Advani's offer which became front-page news.

Dr. Harsh Narain and Koenraad Elst had documented how Syed Shahabuddin had kept shifting his ground regarding proof about the destruction of the Rāma Mandir at Ayodhya. But the VHP-BJP combine was more than willing to provide more proofs. In fact, the stronger the proofs the Hindu scholars provided, the greater became the Muslim demand for something more solid. The leaders of the Ayodhya movement had walked into the trap laid by the likes of Shahabuddin in spite of my repeated warnings that Hindus should do the questioning and make the Muslims do the answering. But these leaders were innocents abroad, having no knowledge of Islamic theology or Islamic history. Gross ignorance is quite often the straw to which optimism clings. All this while the Muslim leaders kept looking down upon the Hindu beggars standing before them with folded hands. I was of the

opinion that the building of the new Rāma Mandir could wait till such time as the BJP got a mandate from the people. The first priority, I thought, should go to educating the people about Islam. But by now the Rāma Mandir at Ayodhya had become an end in itself for the VHP-BJP combine. They were prepared to try any number of tricks, tell any number of lies, and suffer any amount of humiliation, only if they could get their toy assembled at Ayodhya.

I need not narrate the rest of the story which is well-known. The leaders of the Ayodhya movement were soon proclaiming from the house-tops that Islam did not permit destruction of other people's places of worship! They took no notice of my book, *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them*, Volume II, *The Islamic Evidence*, in which I had quoted from scores of histories, written by pious Muslim historians, to the effect that destroying Hindu temples and replacing them with mosques was a favourite pastime of Muslim rulers down to the fall of the Mughal dynasty. I had also included in this book a chapter, Islamic Theology of Iconoclasm, to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that destroying other people's places of worship was a pious performance in Islam because the Prophet himself had destroyed all pre-Islamic Pagan temples in Arabia. The leaders of the Ayodhya movement were out to flatter Islam in order to coax the Muslims to part voluntarily with the Rāmājanmabhūmi site. They got nowhere.

I have heard people from the Sangh *parivāra* saying quite often that the Congress does not know how to treat the Muslims. They go about telling the Muslims that while the Congress views them only as a vote-bank, the Sangh *parivāra* honours them as human beings and honest Muslims. They are appealing to the Muslims to rally round the BJP flag. I am reminded of a Chinese story. A landlord was in the habit of strangling his wives. Every time he strangled a wife, another woman came forward to marry him. When people told the new ones the number of women he had already strangled, everyone of them replied, "Oh! They didn't understand the old dear." And every one of them got strangled in her own turn.